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Information Act 'Eroding' CIA Scope, Aide Claims

By MARY O. BRADLEY
Staff Writer

The Freedom of Information Act is "eroding" the ability of the Central Intelligence Agency to recruit and protect agents overseas, a CIA official told a local group Saturday night.

Frank C. Carlucci, CIA deputy director, told a meeting of the Keystone State Chapter of the Association of Former Intelligence Officers at the Penn Harris Motor Inn, Camp Hill, that the agency spends \$3 million a year answering 88 requests a week about information and reports.

"It's not the workload that's troubling us, but the 'chilling effect' this has on our work overseas," Carlucci said. "We seem to have laws that help our enemies. No one is going to confide in you if his information or his name is going to come out in a newspaper or congressional hearing."

The "principal impediment" facing CIA operatives now is the ability to "protect their sources and methods," he said, adding: "this ability has eroded."

"Everyone is claiming a legitimate need to know, but it's axiomatic, the more people who know, the more leaks are likely," Carlucci said. He has held the No. 2 spot in the CIA since February 1978.

In addition to external assaults on the CIA's wall of security, the agency faces pressures from within, Carlucci said. "We have a problem with former employees who like to take pen in hand," he said.

CIA agents are required to sign an agreement promising never to divulge classified information without the prior consent of the CIA director, he said. But some agents have ignored their oath.

"If we are unable to support our contract, then we are in serious trouble." That contract is being tested in the courts, Appointed For Release 2005/03/16 : CIA-RDP80B01554R003300260053-4
case involving former CIA empl-

ee Frank Snepp, who wrote a book alleging that the CIA bungled the American departure from Vietnam in 1975.

Carlucci said the issue in the case is not whether Snepp published classified information, but who should determine what is classified.

"I submit we have to make a greater effort if we are going to protect our sources and methods. If we lose sources and methods, we lose information, and in some cases, lives are lost," he said.

"In spite of the problems we face, I still think we have one of the most effective intelligence agencies in the world," he said.

Carlucci said the involvement of the CIA in "covert activities" overseas has "become a highly emotional issue in the United States." He defined covert activity as an "effort to exert some political influence in a clandestine fashion."

It is an issue that "has been blown out of proportion," since the CIA's covert-operation capability is "used very sparingly."

The new Intelligence Oversight Board and select committees in the House and Senate serve as watchdog agencies over CIA activities. The review agencies were formed following disclosure of alleged illegal activities by the CIA in the United States and foreign countries.

The Oversight Board, of which former Pennsylvania Gov. William Scranton is a member, is empowered to examine charges of wrongdoing within the CIA and reports directly to President Jimmy Carter, Carlucci said.

However, Carlucci said, getting presidential and congressional approval for overseas operations delays the CIA's "reaction time."

Carlucci said, however, that he would be "the last person to make an argument for no control. I'd be the last person to stand here and defend the abuses of the past."

Carlucci said congressional stud-

ies have shown that CIA abuses were ordered by persons at top levels in the government.

Carlucci said the goal of the CIA must be to strike a balance between "control and effectiveness."